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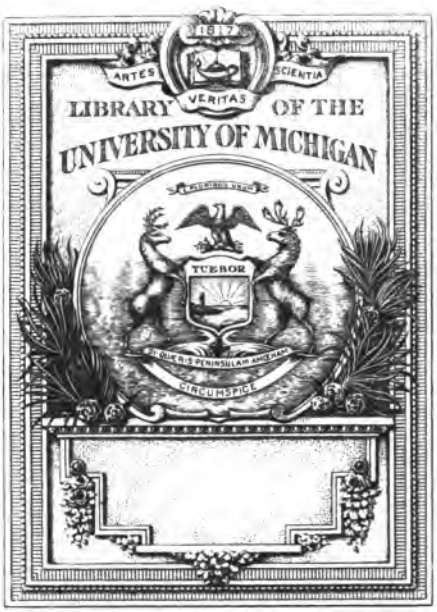

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DANIEL L. QUIRK, JR.

F. L. Quick Jr 1917

Master Patelin, Solicitor

a Comedy in Three Acts

159

by Brueys: Translated by Barrett H. Clark

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BRUEYS.

The " Farce de l'avocat Patelin " belongs to the fifteenth century; the present version is a translation of the best modernization, which was made by D. A. de Brueys (1640–1723). The authorship of the original is not known, though it has been attributed to François Villon.

Special stage-directions have been included in the present translation. The costumes should be fifteenth century French.

MASTER PATELIN, SOLICITOR.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

PATELIN.....*A solicitor*
GUILLAUME.....*A draper*
VALÈRE, GUILLAUME'S *son, in love with* HENRIETTE
AGNELET.....GUILLAUME'S *shepherd, in love with* COLETTE
BARTHOLIN.....*A judge*
A PEASANT
ARCHERS
MADAME PATELIN.....*The solicitor's wife*
HENRIETTE.....*Their daughter*
COLETTE.....*Their maid*

SCENE:—*A street in a village near Paris.*

TIME:—*Fifteenth century.*

MASTER PATELIN, SOLICITOR.

ACT I.

SCENE:—*A small village square. Street entrances to the right and left. Center is* GUILLAUME'S *shop; right,* PATELIN'S *house; left,* BARTHOLIN'S. PATELIN *is alone.*

PATELIN. There is no doubt about it: though I haven't a sou, I must have a new suit of clothes to-day. It's perfectly true, one might as well be a leper as be poor. Who would know I am a solicitor—in these clothes? I left my home town two weeks ago, but since I've been here, things have gone from bad to worse. I don't get a single case from this petty judge here, who is my neighbor; from my other neighbor, the rich draper, I can't even buy a suit. Poor Patelin! And poor Patelin's daughter! Who will marry her now, I wonder? I've got to use my brains—get credit from Monsieur Guillaume, the draper. (*He goes up-stage and stands to one side*)

(*Enter* COLETTE *and* MADAME PATELIN, *from* PATELIN'S *house. They do not see* PATELIN.)

PATELIN. (*Aside*) There's my wife and her maid.

MADAME PATELIN. I don't want to talk to you in the house; I'm afraid my rascally husband might overhear us.

PATELIN. (*Aside*) Hm!

MADAME PATELIN. I want you to tell me where

my daughter gets the money to buy her expensive clothes?

COLETTE. Oh, Madame's husband must give it to her——

MADAME PATELIN. My husband! He hasn't enough to buy clothes for himself.

PATELIN. (*Aside*) True indeed!

MADAME PATELIN. If you don't tell me the truth I'll discharge you, and you shan't marry Agnelet.

COLETTE. Well, I see I must tell you, then! You know that Valère, the son of the rich Monsieur Guillaume, is in love with Mademoiselle Henriette—he gives her presents, you see——

MADAME PATELIN. But where does he get the money? If his father is rich, he is very miserly.

COLETTE. Oh, Madame, when parents give nothing to their children, the children steal from their parents.

MADAME PATELIN. Then why doesn't he ask Henriette to marry him?

COLETTE. He has, only he's afraid his father would never consent. Monsieur Patelin doesn't—begging Madame's pardon—doesn't dress very well, and he imagines Monsieur isn't any too successful.

MADAME PATELIN. That will do. I hear someone. Go in now. (COLETTE *goes into the house, and* PATELIN *comes forward*) Ah, it's you!

PATELIN. It is.

MADAME PATELIN. And what clothes you have on!

PATELIN. I'm not at all vain.

MADAME PATELIN. You're a tramp. And let me tell you, your way of dressing scares away every suitor for Henriette's hand.

PATELIN. That's so: a man is judged by his clothes, so to-day I'm going to have a new suit.

MADAME PATELIN. You! And with what?

PATELIN. Don't worry about that. Good-by.

MADAME PATELIN. Where are you going?

PATELIN. To buy some goods.

MADAME PATELIN. But you haven't a sou?

PATELIN. Never mind. What color do you prefer?

MADAME PATELIN. Get whatever you like if you can find someone foolish enough to let you have the goods. I am going to have a talk with Henriette; we must come to an understanding.

PATELIN. If anyone asks for me, I'll be here in this shop. (MADAME PATELIN *goes into her house*) I must get another suit. I'll try here. Then Monsieur Guillaume will have a better opinion of me.—Here he comes with his son. (*He goes into his house*)

(*Enter* GUILLAUME *and* VALÈRE, *from the shop of the former. They carry a small table, on which is a large piece of cloth. They set it down in front of the shop, then three chairs are brought out by shop-assistants.*)

GUILLAUME. It's hard to see in the shop; I'll just lay this here where people can see it.—Now, Valère, I told you to get me a shepherd to keep a good watch over my flocks.

VALÈRE. But aren't you satisfied with Agnelet, Father?

GUILLAUME. No: he robs me, and I suspect that you know something about the matter!

VALÈRE. I?

GUILLAUME. Yes, you. I've been given to understand that you're in love with some girl around here, and that you are giving her expensive presents; and I know that Agnelet is in love with a certain Colette, who is the maid of your sweetheart. It looks most suspicious.

VALÈRE. (*Aside*) The devil!—But I tell you, Father, Agnelet is honest.

GUILLAUME. Then you aren't. I've lost six score

sheep since he's been in my service this last month. It's impossible that they should all have died of the plague.

VALÈRE. Disease often carries off hundreds.

GUILLAUME. Of people, yes; but my sheep aren't tended by doctors. I tell you, Agnelet is robbing me; I don't trust him. Why, one night I caught him killing one of my sheep. I gave him a sound beating, and the next day brought him before the judge. Before that matter is decided, I wanted to find out how far you are implicated.

VALÈRE. Oh, Father, I have the profoundest respect for your sheep.

GUILLAUME. Well, I'm going to prosecute the fellow. Give me my account book. (*He sits down, as* VALÈRE *goes into the shop, returning a moment later with an account-book*) Now, leave me. If a bailiff comes, call me. I've sent for one. (VALÈRE *goes out. Enter* PATELIN, *from his house. Looking over his accounts*) "Six hundred head of sheep—"

PATELIN. (*Coming to* GUILLAUME) Your humble servant, Monsieur.

GUILLAUME. (*Without looking up*) The bailiff? Wait a moment.

PATELIN. No, Monsieur, I am——

GUILLAUME. A suit, eh? One moment.

PATELIN. No, Monsieur, I have the honor to be a solicitor.

GUILLAUME. I don't need a solicitor. Humble servant!

PATELIN. Possibly you have heard my name: Monsieur Patelin!

GUILLAUME. Patelin—solicitor? I don't know you.

PATELIN. Monsieur, among the papers of my late father I came across the memorandum of an unpaid debt——

GUILLAUME. I have no debts! Don't bother me.

PATELIN. You are mistaken, Monsieur: my

PHOTOMOUNT

father owed you three hundred crowns, and as I am a man of honor, I've come to pay you——

GUILLAUME. (*Quickly rising*) Pay me?! Please wait one moment—now I remember you! Yes, yes, I have known your family for years; you lived in a neighboring town to my own. I beg your pardon—your most humble and obedient servant. We are old friends. Pray be seated, Monsieur. (*They bow ceremoniously.* GUILLAUME *offers* PATELIN *the chair which is farthest away from the goods, but* PATELIN *takes the one nearest to it*)

PATELIN. Monsieur——

GUILLAUME. Monsieur——

PATELIN. (*After they are both seated, laying his hand on the goods*) If everyone were as scrupulous as I am, I should be a rich man to-day, but I respect the property of others. I maintain that the first duty of an honest man is to pay his debts. Now, I should like to know when it would be convenient for you to receive the money?

GUILLAUME. Oh, as soon as you like.

PATELIN. I have the amount all ready at my notary's, but we must have time to make out a proper receipt there. The matter must be officially taken care of, as it is of some importance to my daughter, Henriette.

GUILLAUME. Of course. Well, shall we say to-morrow at five in the morning?

PATELIN. At five. Good! I trust I haven't troubled you too much, Monsieur Guillaume?

GUILLAUME. Not in the least. I have plenty of time—I have no customers just now.

PATELIN. As a rule you do more business than anyone else in your trade around here.

GUILLAUME. I work hard.

PATELIN. You're the cleverest man in this district. (*Pointing to the cloth*) Nice piece of goods, that!

GUILLAUME. Yes, isn't it?

PATELIN. And you are a first-rate business man.

GUILLAUME. Oh, Monsieur!

PATELIN. Everyone likes you, too.

GUILLAUME. Oh, oh, Monsieur!

PATELIN. This cloth has a wonderful color!

GUILLAUME. Yes, a nice shade of chestnut.

PATELIN. I'll wager, Monsieur Guillaume, that you selected that tint yourself!

GUILLAUME. Yes, yes—together with my dyer.

PATELIN. I knew you had an original mind.

GUILLAUME. Well, well!

PATELIN. (*Feeling the goods*) Yes, a very nice piece of goods.

GUILLAUME. Pure English wool.

PATELIN. I thought so. Speaking of England, Monsieur, weren't we together at school?

GUILLAUME. Under Monsieur Nicodème?

PATELIN. Exactly. You were a handsome young fellow.

GUILLAUME. So my mother used to say.

PATELIN. And very clever at learning.

GUILLAUME. I knew how to read and write at eighteen.

PATELIN. Too bad you never entered politics. You could have governed a country.

GUILLAUME. Oh, I—perhaps——

PATELIN. (*Again handling the goods*) Why, I was just thinking about getting some goods like that. My wife wants me to have a new suit made. When I come to see you to-morrow morning, I think I'll have you make me a suit out of this.

GUILLAUME. I'll save it for you.

PATELIN. (*Aside*) Save it? The devil!—I had laid aside 1200 livres to-day which I didn't want to touch, but I'll use some of that money to buy this.

GUILLAUME. Oh, never mind that; you shall have the goods all the same.

PATELIN. Thank you, but I dislike buying on

PHOTOMOUNT

credit.—Now, how much of that cloth do you think I'll need?

GUILLAUME. Let me see—do you want a whole suit?

PATELIN. Yes—everything.

GUILLAUME. That will require about—yes—six ells. Shall I cut the goods?

PATELIN. No, Monsieur, I want to pay cash: I always insist on that.

GUILLAUME. Excellent principle.

PATELIN. Monsieur Guillaume, would you care to dine with me sometime at the "Ecu de France?"

GUILLAUME. How about to-morrow, the day of the village festival?

PATELIN. Good! I want to hear you talk about what's going on in the world. I understand you are an excellent conversationalist? You used to be!

GUILLAUME. Do you remember that?

PATELIN. Do I remember? Every prophecy you made has come true.

GUILLAUME. I seem to have the knack of foreseeing events.

PATELIN. (*Again handling the goods*) Now how much do you charge an ell for this?

GUILLAUME. (*Looking at the tag*) The usual price is six crowns, but I'll do you a favor and let you have it for five.

PATELIN. Deeply obliged! Thirty crowns, then.

GUILLAUME. Thirty.

PATELIN. Yes, thirty. Shake hands. (*They shake hands*) To-morrow we dine, then: my wife is a wonderful cook.—By the way, she would like to see me in my new suit. If I took the goods early in the morning, could it be ready by noon?

GUILLAUME. If you don't allow the tailor enough time, he'll spoil the material.

PATELIN. That would be too bad.

GUILLAUME. You say you have the cash at hand?

PATELIN. Of course.

COLETTE. This man is pulling me away.

HENRIETTE. If you love me, Valère, please don't think of me again before you get your father's consent.

COLETTE. (*To* HENRIETTE) That is just what Agnelet and I are going to do.

AGNELET. (*To* HENRIETTE) I've already thought of a good honest plan, when I'm through with this trial business.

VALÈRE. (*To* AGNELET) I'll stand by you, no matter what happens.

HENRIETTE. Here is my Father. We mustn't be seen.

(*They all go out. Enter* PATELIN *and* MADAME PATELIN *from their house.*)

PATELIN. Well, how do you like the goods?

MADAME PATELIN. It's very nice, but how are you going to pay for it? You promised Monsieur Guillaume that you would pay him to-morrow morning.

PATELIN. When he comes, remember to do as I said. You must help me.

MADAME PATELIN. I can't do anything else. But I say, you ought to be ashamed of yourself—it's dishonest.

PATELIN. Anyone can be honest so long as he is rich. Now let's drop the subject. Let us start to your sister's. When we come home we can cut the goods—in case of accident.

MADAME PATELIN. Very well, only I'm sure something terrible is going to happen to-morrow.

(*They turn to go.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE:—*The same as in the preceding act.* GUILLAUME *is standing in front of his shop.*

GUILLAUME. Dear me, it's long past five, and my man isn't here yet! I'll go to him—(*He turns to go, then comes back*) No, he is so honest and exact that he's sure not to fail me. Still he has six ells of my goods. What shall I do? I think I'll pretend to be making a call on him, but I shan't breathe a word about the money. (*He goes to the door of* PATELIN'S *house and knocks*)

PATELIN'S VOICE. (*Trembling*) Wife—wife, dear——!

GUILLAUME. Ah, it's he!

PATELIN'S VOICE. Open the door—it's—the—apothecary.

GUILLAUME. The apothecary?

PATELIN'S VOICE. Tell him to bring me my medicine at once.

GUILLAUME. His medicine? (*He again knocks on the door*)

PATELIN'S VOICE. *Will* you open the door!?

(MADAME PATELIN *opens the door.*)

MADAME PATELIN. (*In a melancholy tone of voice*) Who is this? Ah, it's you, Monsieur Guillaume?

GULLAUME. Yes, it's I. I presume you are Madame Patelin?

MADAME PATELIN. At your service. I'm sorry, Monsieur, I mustn't speak any louder.

GUILLAUME. That makes no difference, Madame —I have come to see Monsieur Patelin.

MADAME PATELIN. Please lower your voice, Monsieur.

GUILLAUME. But why, please? I have come to pay your husband a visit.

MADAME PATELIN. Please, not so loud!

GUILLAUME. I'll whisper if you like, only I must see him.

MADAME PATELIN. (*Almost in tears*) The poor man can't see a soul!

GUILLAUME. What's that? What could have happened to him since yesterday?

MADAME PATELIN. Ah, Monsieur Guillaume, he hasn't left his bed for the past week!

GUILLAUME. Why, only yesterday he was in my shop!

MADAME PATELIN. In your shop? My dear Monsieur, you must have dreamed that last night!

GUILLAUME. Dreamed indeed! Did I dream that he went off with six ells of my goods—which are now gone?

MADAME PATELIN. Six ells of goods!

GUILLAUME. Yes, six ells of chestnut-colored goods! Did I dream, too, that he invited me to dinner, here?

MADAME PATELIN. Monsieur, this is no time for joking!

GUILLAUME. Joking! I'm in no mood for joking, myself, Madame! I tell you he carried off six ells of goods yesterday.

MADAME PATELIN. I would to Heaven he had been able to! Yesterday, Monsieur Guillaume, he was delirious, and he still is.

GUILLAUME. Madame, I think you are delirious yourself. I tell you, I must speak with your husband.

MADAME PATELIN. Impossible. (*She pretends to cry*) It would melt your heart to look at him.

GUILLAUME. Never mind; only let me see him. (*He runs to the door and tries to open it*)

MADAME PATELIN. If you open that door, you'll kill my husband. He sometimes tries to run away. (*The door opens and* PATELIN, *in a dressing-gown and night-cap, looking wild-eyed and scared, tries to run away*) There he goes. Help me catch him! (*She catches him and makes him sit down on a chair which* GUILLUME *has brought from in front of his shop*)

PATELIN. Oh, dear, oh, dear, my poor head!

GUILLAUME. (*Looking at him in astonishment*) Poor fellow!—Monsieur Patelin, your humble servant.

PATELIN. (*To* GUILLAUME) How are you, Monsieur Anodin?

GUILLAUME. Monsieur Anodin?

MADAME PATELIN. (*To* GUILLAUME) He thinks you are the apothecary. You'd better go.

GUILLAUME. (*To* MADAME PATELIN) I shan't bother him. (*To* PATELIN) Monsieur, you remember that yesterday——?

PATELIN. Yes, those were nasty pills you gave me.

GUILLAUME. I want to speak about that goods—

PATELIN. My dear wife—please—please drive away these black butterflies—they're troubling me. (*He looks up in the air*) There they are—flying!

GUILLAUME. (*Also looking into the air*) I don't see any butterflies.

MADAME PATELIN. He's delirious, I tell you. Go away.

GUILLAUME. I tell you, I want my money!

PATELIN. Oh, these curséd doctors, they're killing me.

GUILLAUME. Now he's not delirious! Monsieur Patelin——

PATELIN. I wish to plead on behalf of Homer, Messieurs——

GUILLAUME. For Homer?

PATELIN. Against the nymph Calypso.

GUILLAUME. Calypso? Who the devil is he?

MADAME PATELIN. It's from the book he was reading when he fell sick.

GUILLAUME. (*Aside*) Is this really Patelin?

MADAME PATELIN. Please leave the poor man to himself.

GUILLAUME. Let's wait until he—there, he looks as if he wanted to speak to me.

PATELIN. Ah, Monsieur Guillaume——

GUILLAUME. He recognizes me! Yes?

PATELIN. I beg your pardon.

GUILLAUME. (*To* MADAME PATELIN) You see?

PATELIN. I beg your pardon for not coming to see you during the past two weeks——

GUILLAUME. But, yesterday, you——

PATELIN. Yesterday, I sent one of my assistants to make my excuses——

GUILLAUME. However——

PATELIN. (*Rising*) The court will kindly notice that the Pyrrhic was a dance. (*He begins to dance*) Tra la la—let's dance! (PATELIN *takes* GUILLAUME

PATELIN. (*Stopping a moment, then crying out*) *by the arm and makes him dance*)

GUILLAUME. Stop this! I want my money! Stop, thief! I hear thieves! (*He runs at* GUILLAUME) Stop thief!

GUILLAUME. (*As he runs off*) Help! Help!

MADAME PATELIN. At last! I'll be here in case he comes back. (*She goes into her house*)

(*Enter* BARTHOLIN.)

PATELIN. (*Mistaking* BARTHOLIN *for* GUILLAUME) Ah, here he is! Stop thief!—Oh, it's Monsieur Bartholin!

BARTHOLIN. Who is that crying "Stop thief?" What's all this row about? Ah, it's you, my friend.

PATELIN. Yes, it's I.

PHOTOMOUNT

BARTHOLIN. And in that costume? And armed?

PATELIN. I thought——

BARTHOLIN. *Militant causarum patroni!*

PATELIN. I thought I heard thieves.

BARTHOLIN. You should have reported that to the police.

PATELIN. I didn't see any.

BARTHOLIN. You should have got your witnesses.

PATELIN. Against whom?

BARTHOLIN. And hang them.

PATELIN. Hang whom?

BARTHOLIN. We can't have thieves around here.

PATELIN. I tell you, there weren't any. It was my mistake.

BARTHOLIN. Then put down your sword, put on your official robe and come to the court. We open in an hour.

PATELIN. Very well. (BARTHOLIN *goes out*) Angelet's trial. Ah, here he is—with Colette! I'll go. (*He goes into his own house*)

(*Enter* AGNELET *and* COLETTE.)

COLETTE. You need a very clever lawyer to get you out of trouble. Monsieur Patelin is the only one in the whole town who can help you.

AGNELET. I tried him not long ago, but I don't know what to do. You know, we forgot to pay him last time.

COLETTE. Perhaps he's forgotten all about that. You needn't tell him you're in Monsieur Guillaume's service—he might not like to plead against him.

AGNELET. I'll only speak of my master, and mention no names.

COLETTE. Good, and when the trial is over, we'll get the young people married, won't we? Here he is. Good-by. (*She goes out*)

(*Enter* PATELIN, *from his house.*)

PATELIN. Hello there, aren't you the man who is going to marry Colette?

AGNELET. Yes, Monsieur.

PATELIN. There were two of you—I told you you deserved the galleys. One of you forgot to pay me.

AGNELET. It was my brother, Monsieur.

PATELIN. When you left prison, you were both sick. One of you died.

AGNELET. It wasn't me.

PATELIN. So I see.

AGNELET. But I was sicker than my brother. Now I've come to you to ask you to plead for me against my master.

PATELIN. Isn't your master a farmer?

AGNELET. Yes. I'll pay you well.

PATELIN. I know you will. Now tell me your case.

AGNELET. You know I don't get very good wages for being a shepherd, and from time to time I negotiate with a butcher——

PATELIN. Negotiate?

AGNELET. I—I—well, I keep the sheep from dying of the plague.

PATELIN. An excellent remedy. And you tell your master that you kill them to prevent their dying of the plague, and assure him that they should be buried in the ditch—? However, you keep the money for yourself.

AGNELET. That's what my master says, but because the other night—shall I tell you the whole story?

PATELIN. Yes, if you want me to take up your case.

AGNELET. The other night I took a healthy sheep, and was just going to kill it, when—sst!—it died in my hand.

PHOTOMOUNT

PATELIN. I see. He saw you?

AGNELET. My master was hidden in the fold. Then he accused me of stealing six score altogether —and he always tells the truth. Then he beat me (*Pointing to his bandaged head*) You see? You're a lawyer, put him in the wrong and me in the right.

PATELIN. I understand the whole affair now. There are two ways of going about it: the first won't cost you a sou.

AGNELET. Let's take that.

PATELIN. Very well. You have cash?

AGNELET. Yes, I have.

PATELIN. Hide it well.

AGNELET. I will.

PATELIN. Your master will have to pay the costs.

AGNELET. So much the better.

PATELIN. And you won't have to pay a thing.

AGNELET. That satisfies me.

PATELIN. Of course, on the other hand, he could have you hanged.

AGNELET. I don't like that way.

PATELIN. Now, you will be brought before the judge.

AGNELET. Yes?

PATELIN. Keep this well in mind.

AGNELET. I'll remember. I have a good memory.

PATELIN. To every question that is addressed to you, whether by the judge, or the prosecutor, or myself, don't answer any more than you answer to your sheep. Understand?

AGNELET. That's not hard.

PATELIN. I think, too, I can make a point about your damaged head—but I insist on being very well paid.

AGNELET. I swear you will be.

PATELIN. Monsieur Bartholin will be ready in a short time. Be at the court as soon as you can. Good-by, and don't forget to bring the money.

AGNELET. I'll do everything you say. (PATELIN *goes out*)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE:—*As the curtain rises,* AGNELET, BARTHOLIN, *and* PATELIN *are discovered.*

BARTHOLIN. (*Taking his place in the judge's chair*) Now then, let us hear the case.

PATELIN. (*Aside to* AGNELET) Remember how to answer!

BARTHOLIN. (*To* PATELIN) Who is that?

PATELIN. A shepherd who has been beaten by his master. He's going to complain.

BARTHOLIN. His master isn't here, is he? We'll wait for him and his lawyer. (*Enter* GUILLAUME) What does Monsieur Guillaume want here?

PATELIN. (*Trying to hide his face*) Monsieur Guillaume!

GUILLAUME. I'm going to take my case in my own hands.

PATELIN. (*Aside to* AGNELET) So, it's against Monsieur Guillaume, eh? You rascal!

AGNELET. Yes, he's my master.

PATELIN. Hm!

GUILLAUME. (*Looking at* PATELIN) Who is that?

PATELIN. (*Disguising his voice*) Monsieur, I refuse to plead unless you have a lawyer.

GUILLAUME. I don't need a lawyer.

PATELIN. Then I have nothing further to say. (*He tries to go out*)

BARTHOLIN. (*To* PATELIN) No, stay. This is your case.

PATELIN. (*To* BARTHOLIN) But, Monsieur——

BARTHOLIN. Stay, I tell you. If you leave, I'll

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drop you from my list of lawyers.—Monsieur Guillaume, make your complaint.

GUILLAUME. Monsieur, that low-down——

BARTHOLIN. No personalities, please!

GUILLAUME. Very well. That thief, then——

BARTHOLIN. Call him by his name or else call him "shepherd."

GUILLAUME. That rascal of a shepherd has stolen six score of my sheep.

PATELIN. (*Still hiding his face*) That remains to be proved.

BARTHOLIN. (*To* PATELIN) What is the matter?

PATELIN. A severe toothache.

BARTHOLIN. Too bad! (*To* GUILLAUME) Proceed.

GUILLAUME. (*Aside*) He looks like the man who stole my goods!

BARTHOLIN. What are your proofs?

GUILLAUME. Proofs? Why, yesterday, I sold him—I let him have—six ells of cloth—I mean—he stole—I had six hundred sheep, and now there are only four hundred and eighty.

PATELIN. I deny that.

BARTHOLIN. (*To* GUILLAUME) But where are your proofs?

GUILLAUME. (*Looking intently at* PATELIN) Where are my—six ells—my six score of sheep?

PATELIN. They died of the plague.

GUILLAUME. It's the man himself.

BARTHOLIN. No one denies that. You have been told that your sheep died of the plague. What is your answer to that?

GUILLAUME. With all due respect to your honor, I say it's false. He killed them and sold them. Only yesterday, I myself—It *is* he! (*Aside*) I sold him—(*Aloud*) Six ells—(*Looking at* AGNELET) I caught him in the act of killing a sheep.

PATELIN. (*Uncovering his face, seeing that by doing so he is making* GUILLAUME *nervous*) Pure invention, Monsieur. He says this in order to excuse himself for giving the shepherd a severe beating. The shepherd is going to sue Monsieur for damages.

GUILLAUME. It's he, your honor, I tell you! Yesterday he ran away with six ells of goods, and he promised to pay me the thirty crowns this morning.

BARTHOLIN. What the devil has that to do with the case? We are now discussing sheep.

GUILLAUME. Very well, your honor, but we'll speak of this later.—As I said, I was hidden in the sheep-fold—I saw him take a big healthy sheep—(*Looking at* PATELIN) and ran away with the six ells!

BARTHOLIN. Six ells of sheep?

GUILLAUME. No, of cloth.

BARTHOLIN. Let's drop the cloth and the man, and return to our sheep.

GUILLAUME. Very well. Then he took a knife from his belt—and cut the goods—then he took it home under his arm—now he denies he owes me the money.

PATELIN. You see, your honor, he has no idea what he's saying!

GUILLAUME. I know only too well what I'm saying. (*Looking at* AGNELET) He stole six score of my sheep—(*Looking at* PATELIN) and this morning instead of paying me my thirty crowns, he talked about black butterflies and the nymph Calyspo, and made me dance——

PATELIN. (*Laughing*) Ha, ha, ha! He's mad!

BARTHOLIN. Really, Monsieur, all the courts of the kingdom couldn't understand you. You accuse this shepherd of having stolen six score of your sheep, then you proceed to talk about six ells and thirty crowns and black butterflies and a thousand

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other things. Please let us return to the sheep, otherwise I shall have to release the shepherd. I ought to have examined him myself. (*To* AGNELET) Come here. What is your name?

AGNELET. Baa! Baa!

GUILLAUME. He lies! His name is Agnelet.

BARTHOLIN. (*To* GUILLAUME) No matter. (*To* AGNELET) Tell me, now, did you steal six score of Monsieur's sheep?

AGNELET. Baa! Baa!

BARTHOLIN. Perhaps he's afraid of the law. We mustn't frighten him.—Did Monsieur find you one night killing a sheep?

AGNELET. Baa! Baa!

BARTHOLIN. What does he mean by his "Baa! Baa!"?

PATELIN. He was struck senseless, and he can't think.

BARTHOLIN. You are very much to blame, Monsieur Guillaume.

GUILLAUME. To blame? One of them steals my cloth, and the other my sheep. To blame?

BARTHOLIN. You ought never to strike a man, especially on the head.

GUILLAUME. It was night—and when I strike, I don't know where I'm striking.

PATELIN. You see, your honor, he confesses.

GUILLAUME. Oh, stop your nonsense! You'll pay me for those six ells of cloth.

BARTHOLIN. Still talking about your cloth! Did you come here to make fun of the law? (*He rises*) I dismiss the case.

GUILLAUME. I appeal. (*To* PATELIN) I'll deal with you later! (GUILLAUME *goes out*)

PATELIN. (*To* AGNELET) Thank his honor.

AGNELET. (*To* BARTHOLIN) Baa! Baa!

BARTHOLIN. That will do. (BARTHOLIN *goes out*)

PATELIN. Now you're free. You might have hanged for this. Pay me now—you promised.

AGNELET. Baa! Baa!

PATELIN. You did that very well; but now I want my money, understand?

AGNELET. Baa! Baa!

PATELIN. Never mind the "Baa! Baa!" We're alone now. Are you going to pay me?

AGNELET. Baa! Baa!

PATELIN. You rascal! Do you think I'm going to stand for this! (*He makes for* AGNELET, *who runs out*) *Will* you pay me, you——!

(*Enter* COLETTE.)

COLETTE. (*Holding on to* PATELIN) Please let him go, Monsieur. I have another matter to talk about.

PATELIN. What is it?

COLETTE. Agnelet's bandaged head is a means, I think, of forcing Monsieur Guillaume to consent to the marriage of his son and your daughter. Won't you get a good fee?

PATELIN. How is that?

COLETTE. Agnelet goes to a doctor, and while he is under treatment, he dies. It's Monsieur Guillaume who will have killed him.

PATELIN. I see the plan!

COLETTE. Just help us. Now I'm going to demand justice of the judge. (*She goes out*)

PATELIN. Luckily Guillaume confessed he struck Agnelet. I'll forgive that shepherd if I'm able to marry off my daughter with his help. (*A pause, then*)

(*Enter* BARTHOLIN *and* COLETTE, *weeping copiously.*)

BARTHOLIN. (*To* COLETTE) What's this? Poor fellow! But it was sudden, wasn't it?

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PATELIN. Everyone in town has heard about it.

BARTHOLIN. I will see that justice is done, my child. Don't cry!

COLETTE. We—w-were going to be married.—Oh, dear, oh, dear!

BARTHOLIN. Console yourself! He wasn't your husband, you know!

COLETTE. That's why I'm crying so!

PATELIN. Poor girl! This is very serious for Monsieur Guillaume!

BARTHOLIN. He shall be punished. On your complaint, I have summoned him to appear. Meantime I must look at the body. It's at your uncle's, you say? I'll return in a moment. (*He goes out*)

PATELIN. He'll find out the trick now.

COLETTE. Oh, my uncle is a clever man, and he knows what we are doing. Agnelet has put a dead sheep in the bed.

PATELIN. But possibly someone may recognize him in the town meanwhile?

COLETTE. H's gone to hide in a neighbor's barn. He won't show his face till after the wedding.

(*Re-enter* BARTHOLIN.)

BARTHOLIN. Horrible! Horrible!

COLETTE. (*Crying*) Oh, dear ! Oh, dear!

PATELIN. Poor Monsieur Guillaume! He was a good man!

BARTHOLIN. I, too, am sorry for him, but what can we do? He has killed a man, and the victim's fiancée asks for justice.

PATELIN. Colette, it would do us no good if he were hanged. Wouldn't it be better if you——?

COLETTE. (*To* PATELIN) Ah, Monsieur, I have no reason to wish for his death; I don't want revenge. If there were some means of saving his life—and then, Monsieur's daughter is in love with Valère——

BARTHOLIN. Indeed!

COLETTE. Valère, you know, is Monsieur Guillaume's only child, but his father refuses to consent to the marriage. You men are so clever, see if you can't think of some way to bring about the marriage.

BARTHOLIN. (*To* PATELIN) Will this girl consent to withdraw the case if Monsieur Guillaume allows his son to marry your daughter?

COLETTE. That's it!

PATELIN. We shall be merciful——

BARTHOLIN. (*To* COLETTE) He will first be brought here; then I shall talk with him. Do you consent, Monsieur Patelin?

PATELIN. Of course, I hadn't intended to marry off my daughter so soon, and I'm not particularly anxious to save Monsieur Guillaume's life—but—yes—I consent.

BARTHOLIN. I think he is being brought now. (*To* COLETTE) Quick, now, see that the poor boy is buried in secret—I don't wish to be guilty of prevarication! (COLETTE *goes out*)

PATELIN. As a pure formality I'll go and make out a contract which you will have him sign. (PATELIN *goes out*)

(*Enter* GUILLAUME, *escorted by a number of archers.*)

BARTHOLIN. Here you are! Do you know the charge, Monsieur Guillaume?

GUILLAUME. Yes; that rascal Agnelet says he is dead.

BARTHOLIN. He is—I have just seen his body with my own eyes. You are guilty of murder.

GUILLAUME. The devil!

BARTHOLIN. Now, I have a proposal to make you: it depends on you whether or not you will be set free.

GUILLAUME. In that case, your humble servant! (*He starts to go out, but the archers stop him*)

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BARTHOLIN. One moment! I should like to know whether you would rather marry your son or be hanged?

GUILLAUME. I don't want either.

BARTHOLIN. Let me explain. You killed Agnelet, did you not?

GUILLAUME. I struck him. If he died, that's his fault.

BARTHOLIN. No, it is yours. Listen to me: Monsieur has a very beautiful and intelligent daughter.

GUILLAUME. And she's as poor as he is.

BARTHOLIN. Your son is in love with her.

GUILLAUME. What of it?

BARTHOLIN. The girl who was going to marry Agnelet is willing to drop the case if you consent to this marriage.

GUILLAUME. I refuse.

BARTHOLIN. (*To the archers*) Take him to jail.

GUILLAUME. Jail? At least let me go and tell my family not to expect me.

BARTHOLIN. (*To the archers*) Guard him carefully.

(*Enter* PATELIN.)

PATELIN. (*Aside to* BARTHOLIN, *as he hands him a piece of paper*) Here's is the contract. (*Enter* COLETTE, VALÈRE, HENRIETTE *and* MADAME PATELIN. *To* GUILLAUME) Monsieur, my entire family is at your service!

GUILLAUME. Heavens!

BARTHOLIN. (*To* GUILLAUME) Quick, now, decide. Do you consent?

GUILLAUME. Yes.

BARTHOLIN. Then sign this contract.

GUILLAUME. No!

BARTHOLIN. (*To the archers*) To jail with him!

GUILLAUME. You *are* in a hurry!

BARTHOLIN. You shall have just one more chance.

GUILLAUME. One more chance?

BARTHOLIN. Then, if you still refuse, you will be hanged.

GUILLAUME. Hanged! Pity me!

BARTHOLIN. Then sign. If you refuse I can't help you.

GUILLAUME. Merciful Heavens! (*He signs*)

BARTHOLIN. (*Taking the contract*) Good! (*He gives* PATELIN *the contract*) My congratulations. (*To* GUILLAUME) You are free.

GUILLAUME. This has been a fine day for me!

PATELIN *and* MADAME PATELIN. We deeply appreciate this honor——

GUILLAUME. And well you may: it costs you nothing!

VALÈRE. (*To* GUILLAUME) Father, I object—

GUILLAUME. Go to the devil!

HENRIETTE. (*To* GUILLAUME) I deeply regret——

GUILLAUME. So do I!

COLETTE. (*To* GUILLAUME) What are you going to give me in place of Agnelet?

GUILLAUME. The sheep he stole!

(*Enter* AGNELET, *running, followed by two peasants with pitch-forks.*)

FIRST PEASANT. March!

AGNELET. Help!

SECOND PEASANT. March!

AGNELET. Help!

GUILLAUME. Traitor! Scoundrel! So you aren't dead? I might as well kill you now—it'll cost me no more!

(AGNELET *falls to his knees.*)

BARTHOLIN. Wait! (*To the* PEASANTS) Where did you find this ghost?

FIRST PEASANT. He was hiding in our barn! We tried to arrest him.

BARTHOLIN. (*To* AGNELET, *noticing that he no longer wears a bandage*) So your head wasn't damaged, after all?

AGNELET. (*Crying*) N–no.

BARTHOLIN. Then what did I see in that bed?

AGNELET. A dead sheep.

GUILLAUME. (*To* PATELIN) Give me back that contract!

BARTHOLIN. That's no more than fair.

PATELIN. (*To* GUILLAUME) I will if you'll pay me the stipulated dowry: ten thousand crowns. Ten thousand crowns!

GUILLAUME. I'd rather let matters stand as they are.—But you'll pay me that debt of three hundred crowns, won't you?

PATELIN. When you bring me the note!

GUILLAUME. The note? But what about my six ells of goods?

PATELIN. Your wedding present.

GUILLAUME. Wedding present? At least I'll get that dinner you promised me.

PATELIN. We've already had dinner!

GUILLAUME. Already? (*Pointing to* AGNELET) I'll have my revenge and hang this rascal!

VALÈRE. Father, everything he did was by my orders. I alone am to blame.

GUILLAUME. Ha! So this is the way I am paid for my six score sheep and my six ells of goods!

CURTAIN.

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